

Fairfax County

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School Readiness Collaborative

Early Learning Guidelines



SMART BEGINNINGS
Ready for School — Ready for Life

This project was supported by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Grant # 93.575 as part of Smart Beginnings, with funds made available to Virginia from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of VDSS or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Fairfax County Early Learning Guidelines

Introduction

There has been a growing national focus on understanding both the process and the outcomes of education at all levels. In recent years, advances in science and technology have impacted what is known about how learning takes place in the brain, and just how early that process begins. Federal mandates such as the No Child Left Behind mandate have required school systems to take a close look at what children should be learning, and how that learning is documented. These two strands have interwoven to renew interest in the crucial role of early learning in later school success. To that end, more than 27 states have developed some kind of early learning guidelines, and virtually all others have works in progress.

Early learning guidelines are the next step in using what we now know about the importance of the early years for later school success, and their development presents the opportunity to:

consolidate our understanding of *young children* and their needs,
provide for the renewal of *curriculum* in the early years,
facilitate *professional development* of ECE teachers,
highlight the essential need for *partnerships with parents/families*, and to
strengthen *communication and coordination with K-12 systems*.

View of the Child

Young children, as we now know, are building the neural connections for learning from even before birth. The role of supportive, positive relationships cannot be over-emphasized as important to positive, healthy development of children.

“Children learn through their important relationships (social learning); they learn when they feel good and are engaged and motivated in what they are learning (emotional learning); and they learn when they are making sense of their world (intellectual learning). One type of learning...is not more important than another, since for children to learn—social, emotional and intellectual learning all go together”

(Families and Work Institute p.2).

Environments for learning focus on the whole child’s development, and support variability within a developmental continuum. Young children should be seen as capable, developing positively within the context of family and community, and possessing positive attributes and dispositions for learning.

Role of Curriculum for Early Learning

Curriculum for young children is based in their primary learning mode - play. Young children need to be active learners in and on the environment, making choices among appropriate activities and materials, developing persistence and problem solving skills, and learning to work with and among others. Developmentally appropriate curriculum is child centered, rather than adult centered, but is orchestrated by the adult to meet young children's needs. Adults must be careful observers of children's interests, progress and learning, and be adept at using multiple techniques to craft the curriculum to the children. The dispositions and skills that children develop when very young serve as the base for successful learning in elementary school and beyond.

Professional Development

Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) also support the professional development of early childhood educators. ELG can help professionals assess their programs, gain deeper understanding of individual children, and make good decisions to support children's progress in learning. They help professionals select appropriate curriculum and plan specific learning experiences so children can demonstrate what they have learned.

Early childhood educators can also use ELG to assess their own professional growth, highlighting strengths and achievements, and pinpointing areas for continued growth. Further, ELG can be a useful tool for educators to use when communicating with parents/families about their children, and provide an authentic record of the child's growth over time.

“Well-educated, knowledgeable, and caring teachers are the key to positive outcomes for children. Efforts to create early learning standards must be accompanied by in-depth professional development, coaching, and mentoring for teachers, administrators, and teacher educators - not just about the standards themselves but about appropriate curriculum, teaching strategies, relationships, and assessment tools that together make up a systematic approach to improving outcomes for all children”.

(NAEYC and NAECS/SDE p.10).

Partnerships with Families

Parents and families are children's first and most significant teachers. Research has demonstrated conclusively that when parents are involved in their children's schooling, children are more successful. In the early childhood setting, parents begin the process of learning to interact with their children's teachers, and this sets the stage for future participation in school settings. ELG can support parents' learning about their children, demonstrating how learning takes place through typical early childhood activities, and how these activities actually support the development of skills needed later in the K-12 setting. Parents/families should also be invited to contribute to the ELG, adding information specific to their child, suggesting additional competencies representative of their families or culture, and taking an active role in the partnership between parents and program. Language and cultural practices are not only part of who the child is, but are also vital connections to the child's family and heritage.

Coordination with K-12 school settings

ELG focus on children's developing competencies and the ways the early childhood programs can enhance and document that development. When ELG are aligned with existing guidelines such as Standards of Learning for grades within the public schools, the continuum of learning becomes seamless. The children who enter kindergarten on the first day of the school year are the same children who, the previous week, were enrolled in early education and care programs. It is crucial that young children are supported in their early development in ways that promote the acquisition of skills and positive attitudes towards learning. This will lead to school success.

“High-quality early childhood education can promote intellectual, language, physical, social, and emotional development, creating school readiness and building a foundation for later academic and social competence. By defining the desired content and outcomes of young children's education, early learning standards can lead to greater opportunities for positive development and learning in these early years”.

(NAEYC and NAECS/SDE p.1).

The Early Learning Guidelines provide a framework for supporting children through a seamless continuum between and among programs and settings. But the ELG are guidelines, not restrictive criteria used to find failure in children. They are developmental references, not discrete achievements; they are illustrations of progress, not end states; they are whole-child centered, not domain restrictive; they are integrated across development, not separated into discrete tasks. The ELG are used to support child development and program planning, they are not used to exclude children from participation or highlight perceived deficiencies.

The ELG can, however, be useful in helping identify children who are or may be at risk for special needs. If a child seems to be struggling, or not progressing over time through the progression of development benchmarks, early childhood educators can work with parents to identify available resources such as Child Find to help them better understand the causes underlying their observations and concerns.

The ELG should also be works in progress. Given the fluidity of children's development, our expanding knowledge about the processes of development and learning, and the unique communities from which children come, there should always be openness to adapting or changing ELG as needs dictate. Families and communities must also be involved in both the development of and the review of the ELG, as should be schools and other stakeholders in the community.

“...(T)o succeed in school, children require a specific set of social and emotional characteristics... These characteristics include confidence, curiosity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate, cooperativeness... These characteristics equip children with a ‘school literacy’ more basic than knowledge of numbers and letters. It is these characteristics that are most closely associated with school success”

(Zero to Three *Heart Start* p.1).

Using the Early Learning Guidelines

The ELG were written for young children in child care and early learning programs in Fairfax County. By working closely with staff from Fairfax County Head Start and Early Head Start as well as staff from the Office of Early Childhood within Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), the ELG were also aligned with other existing guidelines, including the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, the FCPS Program of Studies, and the “Foundations Blocks for Early Learning” from the Virginia Department of Education.

There are several organizing features of the Fairfax County Early Learning Guidelines:

the *domains*, or developmental and content areas
the *developmental progression*, or sequence for children over time, and
the *benchmarks, learning experiences, and indicators* that will guide curriculum.

Domains have been selected from the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. They provide a useful way to organize information for purposes of planning curriculum that supports children’s development in all areas of growth and learning. It is important to remember, however, the domains are not meant to fragment the child’s learning into isolated, discrete learning tasks. For example, many learning experiences will cross many domains. As a result, the ELG support a focus on the whole child.

Developmental progression, from infancy through age five or pre-K, illustrates the progress or growth that will occur during the early years. Because young children’s developmental timetables can be different, the ELG highlight developmental progressions, and are not intended to be linked to prescribed ages. Teachers and parents should look for change over time as a measure of development, rather than expecting that each child will achieve competency at the same time in any domain. Children should not be compared one to another; rather each child as a unique individual should be viewed as capable and eager to learn, as he/she achieves milestones at her pace.

Benchmarks, learning experiences, and indicators structure the process that should be used in planning curriculum for young children.

Benchmarks describe what we want children to be able to do as they progress in their development over time. They are not comprehensive of all the potential development that will be seen. Instead, the benchmarks were selected because they demonstrate key developmental behaviors. The benchmarks have been chosen based on the work of Early Head Start with infants and toddlers, Head Start with young preschoolers, and FCPS Office of Early Childhood for older preschoolers.

Learning experiences are just a few examples of the types of materials and activities that adults can provide for young children in order for them to engage in behaviors that will help them practice or experience the associated benchmark.

Indicators are those behaviors adults will observe as children engage in the sample learning experiences when children have mastered the developmental skills described by the benchmark.

Assessment

Portfolios are useful tools for recording children's progress over time. By collecting representative samples of children's work, and providing narrative and graphic evidence of achievement, teachers can document learning and plan more effectively for further growth. Using ELG as a structure, early childhood educators can organize observations of children to capture what they can actually do. This provides the clearest and most accurate picture of each child's development in a format that is easy to share with parents.

Portfolios are also quite useful as a professional development tool. Working to capture children's learning helps teachers develop skills of observation and documentation. Observing and reflecting on children's learning leads to deliberate and thoughtful planning and action. Early childhood educators can create their own professional portfolios, documenting their own training and development, describing and illustrating how they have implemented what they have learned, and determining areas for their own professional growth.

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Social and Emotional Development

Self-Concept

Building self-concept in children allows them to gain an understanding of who they are and their abilities to function in their world. As they become more confident and independent, they begin to feel good about their ability to interact with others.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Learning Experiences	Indicators Behaviors you might see:
		<p>Begin to feel valued and secure in their relationships.</p> <p>Begin to show increasing ability to distinguish between self and others.</p> <p>Begin to feel competent and proud about what they can do.</p>	<p>Be dependable and let children know they can count on you by greeting them each day when they arrive.</p> <p>Ask parents to provide photos of children and their families. Place on floors and lower walls so children can identify themselves and others.</p> <p>Provide materials, such as rattles, that produce a pleasing response when children use them.</p>	<p>Smiles and shows pleasure when talked to.</p> <p>Moves body toward caregiver.</p> <p>Shakes a rattle and smiles.</p> <p>Points to self in photos.</p>
		<p>Begin to develop and express awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences.</p> <p>Develop growing capacity for independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.</p> <p>Display growing confidence in a range of abilities and express pride in accomplishments.</p> <p>Begin to identify self by first and last name.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for children to make choices.</p> <p>Encourage children to participate in self-help skills, such as getting dressed, brushing teeth, and hand washing.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for children to interact with their names. Sing songs and make books with their names in them.</p>	<p>Makes choices about what to do and describes self and personal likes and dislikes.</p> <p>Makes an effort to get dressed, brush teeth or wash hands.</p> <p>Uses names in conversation while playing.</p>
	Pre-K	<p>Display basic knowledge about themselves and their families with full names. (Social Studies Program of Studies-Standard 1).</p> <p>Identify a change in self from birth to present. (Social Studies Program of Studies-Standard 1).</p> <p>Begin to use a variety of resources to gather and communicate information about personal history. (Social Studies Program of Studies-Standard 2).</p>	<p>Write children's words as they tell stories about themselves and families.</p> <p>Provide dramatic play materials that reflect culture and diversity of the children in your group.</p> <p>Read story books about families.</p> <p>Collect objects and create displays that reflect children's interests and personal history.</p>	<p>Talks about self and family members.</p> <p>Imitates significant adults during role play.</p> <p>Identifies with characters in story books by saying things like "I do that too."</p>

Social and Emotional Development

Self-Control

The more children practice self-control, the easier it is for them to express themselves appropriately. With self-control, children's lives become more balanced and focused and they learn to cope with new challenges in everyday life.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Show increasing ability to self regulate when upset. Display increasing ability to initiate activities. Begin to exhibit appropriate expressions of emotion.	Notice individual differences in how infants self-regulate. Help them repeat those actions such as placing fist in mouth to calm down. Give children opportunities to feed themselves. Use words to help children describe their emotions and redirect children to other activities to help them settle their emotions.	Calms self with toys or other materials. Grabs for spoon when being fed, trying to feed self. Seeks adult assistance when upset.
	Pre-K	Show progress in expressing feelings, needs, and opinions in difficult situations and conflicts without harming themselves, others, or property. Develop growing understanding of how their actions affect others and begin to accept the consequences of their actions. Display increasing capacity to follow rules and routines and use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully.	Read and discuss books about difficult situations that children may encounter. Display pictures that show emotions. Create simple rules for daily routines using children's words and input and post them for children to "read".	Attempts to solve difficult situations without adult assistance. Stomps feet, saying, "I am mad". Reminds others of rules and consequences.
		Begin to learn about personal rights and responsibilities (Social Studies Program of Studies, Standard 4). Begin to solve personal and classroom problems (Social Studies Program of Studies, Standard 5).	Have the children assist in making a list of things to remember when using certain materials, such as woodworking tools. Add pictures to the words. Ask children how they would resolve a conflict. Use group meetings to brainstorm solutions when problems arise.	Reminds others of the best ways to use materials or act during play time. Talks about their feelings and the feelings about others. Solves problems with peers.

Social and Emotional Development

Cooperation

Through cooperation, children learn how to live in the world around them. This leads to success in school, by allowing children to learn how to get along and work together.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Begin to show interest in peers and demonstrate caring cooperation. Demonstrate appropriate self-assertion.	Provide many opportunities for children to observe and interact with each other. Provide dolls and soft animals to imitate caring behavior. Roll a ball back and forth to help infants learn to give and take as they play with others.	Pats adult on back when being held. Watches other children. Reaches out to touch another infant's face. Uses words like "mine".
	Pre-K	Increase abilities to sustain interactions with peers by helping, sharing, and discussion. Show increasing abilities to use compromise and discussion in working, playing, and resolving conflicts. Develop increasing abilities to give and take in interactions; to take turns in games or using materials; and to interact without being overly submissive or directive.	Encourage children to build block structures in small groups. Play simple board games such as Teddy Bear Bingo where children take turns.	Joins in the play of others or asks others to join in their play. Follows simple game directions.
		Begin to learn about personal rights and responsibilities (Social Studies Program of Studies, Standard 4). Begin to solve personal and classroom problems (Social Studies Program of Studies, Standard 5).	Use a helpers' chart to demonstrate turn taking when doing various chores. Provide personal cubbies or storage for children to use to keep their personal belongings. Act out ways to solve problems during dramatic play	Demonstrates the ability to negotiate when working and playing with other children. Begins to participate in classroom duties. Takes care of some of personal belongings. Begins to offer solutions to problems without adult supervision.

Social and Emotional Development

Social Relations

Social relations have their beginning in children's developing awareness of others. Social skills that involve understanding that others have feelings take time to grow. As this happens over time, children seek out peers in their play.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Begin to accept comfort from familiar adults. Begin to show preferences toward other children. Begin to respond sympathetically to peers who are in need, upset, or angry.	Greet children warmly upon arrival. Provide toys, like a rocky boat or a sorting box, where children can join in with others and play together. Have children hold hands during transitions.	Smiles at familiar adults. Is affectionate toward familiar people. Joins other children in wooden rocking boat.
		Demonstrate increasing comfort in talking with and accepting guidance and directions from a range of familiar adults. Show progress in developing friendships with peers. Progress in responding sympathetically to peers who are in need, upset, hurt, or angry; and in expressing empathy or caring for others.	Invite family members to visit and participate in daily routine. Encourage activities that require cooperation – carrying baskets of toys, cleaning up, setting table for snacks. Use puppets, books with emotions, and photos portraying various feelings such as happy, sad, etc. Talk to the children about the feelings.	Engages in conversation with familiar adults. Chooses to work with the same children over a period of time. Asks other children, "Are you OK?", when they seem to be upset.
	Pre-K	Demonstrate appropriate trust in adults and discuss the role and responsibilities of those who promote welfare and safety of children and adult. (District of Columbia Early Learning Standards). Demonstrate the ability to take turns and interact appropriately with another child (Social Studies Program of Studies, Standard 5).	Have parents speak to the children about their jobs. Have the children choose something to show and share with the other children. Encourage the children to pass around their items to each of the other children.	Asks other adults to assist them, when needed. Waits their turn when another child is talking.

Social and Emotional Development

Knowledge of Families and Communities

As children interact with their families, people in their child care setting and communities, they begin to develop a sense of belonging and an awareness of their social world. While learning about their own families, they learn about their culture. In group settings like child care, they can learn to become aware of the differences among people and cultures, which can help them participate effectively in their world.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	We want children to be able to: (Indicators)	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
	=====	Begin to identify self as a member of a family or group. Begin to understand similarities and differences among people.	Have parents bring in copies of family photos. Tape them around the room. With infants ask, “Who is this?” when referring to a member of their family. Read books about families, such as “Are You My Mother?” and “Black is Black”.	Smiles when family member enters the door. Identifies family member in photos.
	=====	Develop ability to identify personal characteristics, including gender and family composition. Progress in understanding similarities and respecting differences among people, such as genders, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures. Develop growing awareness of jobs and what is required to perform them. Begin to express and understand concepts and language of geography in contents of the classroom, home, and community.	Use props in the dramatic play area that reflect the children’s family life. Provide books in various languages. Take field trips to businesses in the neighborhood. Use map carpets with transportation toys.	Says such things as, “I have a sister/brother, etc.” Acts out adult work roles such as policeman, fireman, teacher, etc. Says what they want to be when they grow up. Recognizes landmarks in the neighborhood. Uses words to describe location of objects in their world.
	Pre-K	Begin to develop a sense of self and family as members of a community (Social Studies Program of Studies-Standard 3). Become aware of different cultures within their own and surrounding communities. (Social Studies Program of Studies – Standard 9)	Have children draw family portraits. Provide foods from different cultures in daily menus. Set up an exhibit of tools, clothing or objects used long ago.	Identifies ways people are alike and different. Begins to demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences (food, clothing, and housing).

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Approaches to Learning

Initiative and Curiosity

Attitudes like initiative and curiosity can be nurtured by learning environments that are rich in stimulating materials and activities. Children who exhibit initiative and curiosity approach learning with a positive disposition that can influence their feelings about school and the likelihood that they will be successful in managing school-related tasks.

		Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators Behaviors you might see:
Developmental Continuum =====	Infancy =====	Show an interest in the world around them. Seek out experiences that are interesting and stimulating. Demonstrate increasing ability to self-initiate.	Place new toys in a baby's visual field so he or she can reach for or move towards these new objects. Take a child outdoors, naming and talking about the things you both see in the environment. Rotate a variety of play materials that are displayed on shelves within a child's reach.	Moves gaze to new objects, moving arms and legs to show pleasure, or trying to grab new objects. Coos and makes other happy sounds when interesting objects are seen Crawls towards play materials that are interesting to shake, mouth, and explore with the senses
		Participate in an increasing variety of tasks and activities. Develop increased ability to make independent choices. Approach tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.	Give children choices throughout their daily routine, especially during "free play" time. Read books about new experiences and whenever possible expose child to real things mentioned in the books. Offer open ended art materials and encourage children to create their own designs with materials.	States choices for preferred activities during their play time. Asks adults questions about how things work or what things are called. Uses art materials in many ways without waiting to be told what to do.
	Pre-K =====	Make decisions and choices about what they want (Social Studies Standard 7). Develop procedures and thinking skills for investigating the world and making decisions (Scientific Investigation, Reasoning and Logic).	Increase the choices available to children and ask them to plan what they will do first, next, and last. Have children explore a collection of objects using such things as magnets, scales, or magnifying glasses.	States preferences. Predicts what might happen next. Shows curiosity by saying things like "I wonder what will happen if I..."

Approaches to Learning

Engagement and Persistence

Children seek out activities and become increasingly involved in their play. They increase the time they spend on each activity and take pleasure in following through on tasks and completing them.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy =====	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		Behaviors you might see:
		Explore objects during play and increase amount of time playing with objects. Repeat actions on objects, varying some behaviors in order to explore their world. Gain satisfaction from accomplishments.	Provide several stacking type toys that encourage a child to use a variety of motions such as dumping and stacking. Have finger food in a small open bowl for a child to eat; when finished say “All done!” Provide a variety of board books for children such as lift and look books.	Stays focused on play with a toy, trying different actions to explore the toy. Smiles or laughs while playing, especially when achieving a result.
		Grow in their ability to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences. Demonstrate increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans. Show growing capacity to maintain concentration over time on a task, question, set of directions or interactions, despite distractions and interruptions.	Have glue, scissors, paper and objects from a collage box available to take to the art table and create a collage. Make projects that take several days to complete, such as paper mache’ or block constructions. Talk about what children will make, and help them follow through on their ideas.	Completes tasks during their play. Focuses on an activity either independently or with a small group of other children.
Pre-K	=====	Begin to develop procedures and thinking skills for investigating the world, solving problems, and making decisions (Science: Investigation, Reasoning, and Logic).	Ask children to describe objects at the science table, writing down the words they use. Construct Lego objects following simple design.	Increases ability to notice things in the environment. Initiates and completes tasks in a timely manner.

Approaches to Learning

Reasoning and Problem Solving

During the course of a day, children will encounter problems and have opportunities to figure things out on their own or with other children. They learn to ask for help, gain confidence in their ability, and take pride in their accomplishment.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators Behaviors you might see:
		Try a variety of actions to investigate consequences and notice cause and effect relationships. Create mental images of objects and people not in the environment.	Provide sorting toys, for child to fit different shapes in the correct opening. Play peek-a-boo and hide and seek games with objects and people, saying things like “Where is the cookie?” and “Here it is!”	Watches the effects actions have on objects and then tries new ways of exploring. Tries to find people or objects when they disappear.
		Develop increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task, or problem. Grow in recognizing and solving problems through active exploration, including trial and error, and interactions and discussions with peers and adults. Develop increasing abilities to classify, compare, and contrast objects, events and experiences.	Provide a variety of puzzles and encourage children to move pieces in different directions in order to figure out where the pieces fit. Make play dough and talk about the amount of flour to use. Predict what will happen by trying different amounts. Provide objects for children to sort into different containers; talk to children about how they are solving these sorting problems.	Shows pleasure after being able to solve a problem on their own or with a group of other children. Says “I can do it myself” as well as knows when to ask an adult for help. Makes predictions based on previous knowledge and experience. Names the way objects are sorted, and begins to describe how they will solve problems.
		Begin to develop procedures and thinking skills for investigating the world, solving problems, and making decisions (Science: Investigation, Reasoning, and Logic). Develop problem solving skills to understand concepts (Mathematics: Problem Solving/Application).	Include books about building structures in the block corner to give children new ideas to try as they build. Have funnels, strainers, and tubes for sand and water play; ask children to predict results. Lead small and large group discussions to solve a variety of problems related to social interactions, as well as science, math, and other topics.	Requests different materials they have used in the past to help them solve problems or explore materials. Begins to use the senses appropriately to learn about unfamiliar objects and events. Uses resources like books and adults to extend their observations. Recognizes informal opportunities to problem solve. Attempts to solve problems in more than one way.

Language

Listening and Understanding.

Children need to be surrounded by adults who talk to them and to others. As children listen to conversations about what is going on around them, they build their vocabulary and their understanding of language.

Learning Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Observed Behaviors
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		<p>Respond to familiar voices, words, and sounds.</p> <p>Respond to familiar songs and music.</p> <p>Begin to respond to adult requests, questions and conversations.</p> <p>Combine gestures with sounds.</p> <p>Begin to react to environmental sounds with adult assistance.</p>	<p>Talk to children including playing voice games. Talk to the baby using a high or low voice, whisper, or click your tongue. Then let the baby repeat the sounds.</p> <p>Sing familiar songs, rhymes and finger-plays.</p> <p>Read baby a book or magazine. Point and name pictures and let him pat or point to the pictures.</p> <p>Take listening walks inside and outside to point out sounds in the environment.</p>	<p>Facial expression changes when they identify a familiar sound.</p> <p>Shows delight in hearing a song or rhyme and tries to follow along.</p> <p>Points/pats on a picture when asked to name the object.</p>
		<p>Demonstrate increasing ability to pay attention to and understand conversations, stories, songs, and poems.</p> <p>Show progress in understanding and following simple and multiple-step directions.</p>	<p>Engage children in conversation throughout the daily routine and encourage conversations between the children.</p> <p>Play games that focus on listening carefully and following directions, such as “Simon Says”.</p> <p>Sing action songs such as “hokey pokey”.</p>	<p>Tells other children at the lunch table their favorite foods.</p> <p>Places the objects on the table when prompted.</p> <p>Puts on his coat when asked.</p> <p>Requests a favorite song or book, when asked.</p> <p>Participates in action songs.</p> <p>Participates in conversations with simple phrases and sentences.</p>
Pre-K		<p>Begin to focus on word meaning to build vocabulary (Building vocabulary).</p> <p>Begin to use, think about, and respond to what is read, written and heard. (Interpreting and Evaluating: Critical Reading Skills).</p> <p>Begin to plan for literacy experiences (Planning for Meaning: Planning for Effective Reading and Writing).</p>	<p>Ask open-ended questions to elicit responses.</p> <p>Retell stories and act out stories using props and puppets.</p>	<p>Participates in rhymes, songs, chants, poetry, and stories.</p> <p>Begins to ask and answer questions about a book.</p> <p>Predicts events in a story.</p> <p>Talks with others about discoveries and actions.</p>

Language

Speaking and Communicating.

Children gain language and vocabulary skills by having frequent opportunities to talk to adults and peers. When these opportunities are a regular and frequent part of the daily routine, children will have stronger language skills as they learn to read and write.

Learning Continuum	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:		Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators Behaviors you might observe:
	Infancy	Use sounds to convey meaning. Repeat sounds, imitates adult actions and language patterns. Name significant people and self. Name objects. Use simple one word sentences. Use two word sentences. Ask questions. Talk/vocalize to self during play with objects, material, and people. Demonstrate expanding vocabulary.	Imitate children's sounds and actions during one-on-one activities and routines. Read books that show familiar objects and play simple question and answer games about objects. Play telephone with the children. Follow their lead and repeat the sounds that they make.	Imitates the sounds that you make. Engages in conversation with others. Uses an increasing number of words in daily conversation.
		Develop increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, questions and for other varied purposes. Progress in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversation and discussions with peers and adults. Use an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary. Progress in clarity of pronunciation and towards speaking in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.	Respond to children's communication and allow the children to take the conversational lead. Add new props in various areas of the room to promote conversation and build vocabulary. Participate in conversations with children during dramatic play.	Tells well-developed, stories; repeats familiar rhymes or songs. Listens with increasing attention to conversations and stories. Uses new vocabulary with increasing frequency to express and describe feelings and ideas.
		Gain confidence while beginning to use oral language for a variety of purposes (Developing Oral Language.) Use an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary (Building Vocabulary).	Listen to children's stories. Write down children's words as they speak. Create a word wall using familiar words from children's experiences. Provide puppets and props to encourage children's conversation.	Uses new vocabulary with increasing frequency to express and describe feelings and ideas. Repeats or extends part of a story. Begins to share and listen to ideas of others.

Literacy

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness involves the understanding of sounds in spoken words and is highly predictive of a young child's success in beginning to read. Research shows that children's progress in learning to read often depends on the phonological awareness they have when entering kindergarten.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		Behaviors you might see:
		Respond to sounds and the spoken language. Imitate sounds in stories, songs and rhymes. Participate in simple word games.	Respond to and repeat the sounds and or words children make "Ma, ma, ma" or "brr, brr." Provide many opportunities to play pat-a-cake and simple finger plays.	Shows an interest in what is being said. Focuses on the person speaking. Tries to imitate a sound that is heard and says it over and over (ba, ba; ga, ga; la, la).
		Show increasing ability to discriminate and identify sounds in spoken language. Show growing awareness of beginning and ending sounds of words. Show progress in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories and poems. Show a growing ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words.	Recite and read rhymes and poems on a regular basis. At snack or meal time, make up rhymes with children based on what they are eating, such as "teddy bears eat apples & pears".	Enjoys trying to rhyme and play with words. Points out matching sounds (cat & hat). Identifies words that begin with the same sound (Nicholas, Naomi & Nouri).
Pre-K		Gain confidence while beginning to use oral language for a variety of purposes in the classroom (Developing Oral Language).	Collect pictures or objects of items that start or end with the same letter or sound. Listen for and acknowledge words that begin with the same initial sound (alliteration), such as "Silly Sally! They begin with the same sound! Clap hands to match syllables in children's names - clap three times for Susannah.	Has a growing awareness of the beginning and ending sounds of words. Discriminates and identifies sounds in spoken language. Grows in ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words.

Literacy

Book Knowledge and Appreciation

Sharing books creates opportunities for adults and children to enjoy one another, the sounds of words, the illustrations and the story. Research shows that children, who are read to often, and at an early age, enter kindergarten with the language and listening skills they need.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		<p>Respond positively to book reading activities with adults.</p> <p>Handle and show interest in books and printed materials.</p> <p>Join in story reading by repeating words.</p> <p>Choose favorite books for adult to read.</p>	<p>Provide many opportunities to look at and interact with different types of books and reading materials.</p> <p>Hand children board books, help them turn the pages and point to the pictures.</p> <p>Encourage children to name objects in books.</p>	<p>Chooses the same book over and over again and asks to have it read.</p> <p>Points to pictures in book when asked to identify an object.</p> <p>Turns pages in books.</p>
		<p>Show a growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and poetry</p> <p>Show a growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children..</p> <p>Demonstrate progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; and to predict what will happen next in a story.</p> <p>Progress in learning how to handle and care for books; knowing to view one page at a time in sequence from front to back; and understanding that a book had a title, author and illustrator.</p>	<p>Place a variety of books in all areas of the room: board books, hardcover books, paperback books, magazines.</p> <p>While reading to a child in your lap, encourage the child to turn the pages.</p> <p>Read stories at group times that can be extended through art and dramatic play.</p> <p>When reading to a child, point out the title, author and illustrator of the book.</p>	<p>Looks through a book with a friend.</p> <p>Asks questions related to the story such as “Who drew the pictures or what happens at the end?”</p> <p>Carefully turns the pages of a book and returns it to the shelf with the cover facing outwards.</p>
Pre-K		<p>Begin to develop an appreciation for literature through a variety of oral, reading, and writing experiences with fiction and nonfiction. (Appreciating Literature).</p> <p>Begin to understand the parts of the story and its meaning (Comprehending Organization: Literary Elements).</p>	<p>While reading a story track your finger along the print from left to right.</p> <p>As you read familiar books to a child, comment briefly on the print itself. For example, you might say “The letters in this book are printed in black” or “All the words are at the bottom of the page”.</p> <p>Have children retell stories using puppets, pictures and flannel boards.</p>	<p>Chooses to look at books.</p> <p>Turns book right side up & looks from left to right.</p> <p>Demonstrates ability to retell and ask questions about stories.</p> <p>Draws pictures based on stories.</p>

Literacy

Print Awareness & Concepts

When children see and interact with words, print letters, and numbers in their everyday world and their child care setting, they learn that print stands for something. Young children begin to understand there is a relationship between spoken and written words by following the print as it is read aloud in storybooks, signs, written notes, and other print materials.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		<p>Show an interest when stories are read.</p> <p>Recognize print in the neighborhood and child care environment.</p>	<p>Provide simple picture books with one word on each page, such as cat, ball.</p> <p>Place empty food containers in the dramatic play area and point out the name on the labels.</p>	<p>Points to the words on the pages of a book.</p> <p>Notices and comments on the print they see around them, such as pointing to the word “Cheerios” on a cereal box.</p>
		<p>Show an increasing awareness of print in classrooms, home and community settings.</p> <p>Develop growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print such as signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus.</p> <p>Demonstrate an increasing awareness of concepts, such as that reading in English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.</p> <p>Show progress in recognizing the association between spoken and written words by following print as it is read.</p> <p>Recognize a word as a unit of print, or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces.</p>	<p>Provide environmental print in all areas.</p> <p>Label shelves with pictures and printed words as labels.</p> <p>Point to words as you read them in books or signs around the child care setting.</p> <p>Write simple phrases or sentences that children use to describe their artwork.</p>	<p>Points to printed words and asks “What does it say?”</p> <p>Points to words in books.</p> <p>Asks an adult to write their words on art work or messages to their family and friends.</p>
Pre-K		<p>Begin to learn some of the conventional patterns of written language (Understanding Conventions: Language Study).</p> <p>Begin to demonstrate an understanding of concepts of print (Unlocking Meaning: Decoding Skills).</p>	<p>Write a story children create with pictures and words.</p> <p>Label all personal items with children’s names.</p> <p>Ask children to identify common letters, words, and numbers that are displayed in their environment.</p>	<p>Begins to recognize a word as a unit of print.</p> <p>Understands that groups of letters form (meaningful) words, and asks what they mean “What does that say?”</p> <p>Frequently identifies first name.</p>

Literacy

Early Writing

Young children develop understandings about the functions of written language and learn that ideas can be written as they are given opportunities to see adults write and to write themselves. They begin to generate ideas about how written language works and explore its uses. Young children's attempts to write through scribbling, forms, and inventive spelling help them to understand writing as information. Over time, attempts at early writing will more closely align to conventional writing.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		See adults around them write. Hold some simple writing tools and make marks when using them.	Model writing during daily routines. Describe what they are writing. Give children opportunities to dabble with crayons, markers and chunky pencils at a table or at an easel.	Picks up crayons and markers. Grasps markers with whole hand and makes random marks.
	Pre-K	Develop an understanding that writing is as way of communicating for a variety of purposes. Begin to represent stories and experiences through pictures, dictation, and in play. Experiment with a growing variety of writing tools and materials, such as pencils, crayons, and computers. Progress from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words such as their own name.	Provide writing materials in the dramatic play area and let the children write down your order, or write a prescription. Create a writing area with writing and printing materials for children to explore. Provide materials that develop strength and control of their hand muscles, such as clay and clothes pins.	Scribbles on a paper, using print -like symbols and some letters. Attempts to writes most letters and some letters of first name. Asks adult to write things down "How do I write I love you?"
		Begin to learn some of the conventional patterns of written language (Understanding Conventions: Language Study). Choose to interact with books, writing and reading related experiences (Making Good Choices: Student Responsibility). Develop fine motor skills in order to communicate through creative representations and written symbols (Developing Handwriting).	Provide a word file in the writing area to help children print messages. Provide interesting writing materials such as sidewalk chalk and paint brushes. Let children make cards for various occasions. Encourage them to write in a way that makes sense to them.	Writes a string of letters, reads them, or asks to have them read. Experiments with a variety of writing tools.

Literacy

Alphabet Knowledge

Letter knowledge is an essential component to begin reading and writing successfully. Functions of letters in writing and their connection to sounds are critical components in children's success in learning to read.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Begin to notice the sounds of letter names.	Sing the ABC song during the day. Use the names of letters in daily conversations.	Repeats the sounds of a few letter names.
	Pre-K	Show progress in associating the names of letters with their shapes and sounds. Increase in ability to notice the beginning letters in familiar words. Identify at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name. Know that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.	Provide letter blocks, alphabet books, magnetic letters, letter puzzles, etc. Use upper and lower case letters when labeling items. Provide letter sorting games using letters that are familiar to the children.	Sees a stop sign and says, "That's S-T-O-P". Points to a Cheerios box and says, "That's C, like in my name."
		Begin to demonstrate an understanding of concepts of print (Unlocking Meaning: Decoding Skills). Begin to learn some of the conventional patterns of written language (Understanding Conventions: Language Study).	Ask children to write their names on artwork and sign in and out. Play simple matching games with pictures and letter sounds. Sing "BINGO" using the children's names. Shape letters out of play-dough.	Frequently recognizes first name. Identifies the first letter of their first name. Begins to learn some of the conventional patterns of written language. Knows that letters of the alphabet are symbols that can be individually named. Notices letters in familiar everyday life and asks how to spell words, names or titles.

Mathematics

Number and Operations

Children benefit from daily experiences involving comparison and counting during their everyday play experiences. Young children notice the effects of increasing or decreasing the items in a collection of objects. Children need many opportunities to match objects and to use counting to describe changes in the number of objects.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Demonstrate growing understanding of relationships (same/different). Demonstrate growing understanding of matching. Demonstrate a growing understanding of sequencing. Begin to use number words.	Read counting books. Play with small blocks. Use number words and comparison words as you stack. Count buttons as you dress child, or the number of crackers as you eat snacks. Sing number songs and finger plays. Arrange blocks in order of size.	Looks at counting book. Groups blocks in small piles and large piles. Participates in counting songs using fingers to represent numbers being sung.
		Demonstrate increasing interest and awareness of numbers and counting as a means for solving problems and determining quantity. Begin to associate number concepts, vocabulary, quantities, and written numerals in meaningful ways. Develop increasing ability to count in sequence to 10 and beyond. Begin to make use of one-to-one correspondence in counting objects and matching groups of objects. Begin to use language to compare numbers of objects with terms such as more, less, greater than, fewer than, and equal to. Develop increased ability to combine, separate, and name how many concrete objects.	Include counting as part of the daily routine. Provide collections of three to five objects (buttons, plastic animals, shells, keys) that encourage counting. Provide counting opportunities while children play with manipulatives. Encourage one to one correspondence as children hand out materials. Read stories and sing songs where groups or objects are taken away, such as “Ten in a Bed”. Provide numerals made of a variety of materials - felt, wood, magnets, and sandpaper.	Counts 10 objects with adult assistance. Uses “more” or “less” appropriately. Groups similar objects. Gives each child one item.
	Pre-K	Begin to develop a sense of number and understanding of numerical relationships that gives them the flexibility to deal with numbers in many different forms (Number Concepts/Theory/Sense). Begin to model and develop an understanding of beginning operations and procedures for computations (Operations).	Play dominos with children lining up the sides with the same number of dots. Give child two objects to count and then give the child two more objects and ask, “How many objects do you have now?”	Matches numeral to correct number of dots. Begins to count objects using one to one correspondence. Begins to model “adding to” and “taking away” using objects.

Mathematics

Geometry and Spatial Sense

Geometry for young children involves observing and describing the shapes that are found everywhere in their environment. Children naturally use geometric shapes and awareness of space as they begin to express themselves through drawing and constructions.

Developmental Continuum		Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to;		What you might see:
Developmental Continuum	Infancy	<p>Begin to develop an awareness of shapes.</p> <p>Begin to develop an awareness of size.</p> <p>Begin to demonstrate use of body and materials in space.</p>	<p>Read shape books.</p> <p>Use words like “big” and “little”, “over” and “under”, when talking to child about objects in the environment.</p> <p>Provide shape sorting toys and shape puzzles.</p> <p>Encourage children to move through an “obstacle course” (moving over, under, through).</p>	<p>Groups same shape or same size objects when using sorting box toys or simple puzzles.</p> <p>Moves toys or their own body in different positions like “under” or “on top”.</p>
		<p>Begin to recognize, describe, compare, and name common shapes, their parts and attributes.</p> <p>Progress in ability to put together and take apart shapes.</p> <p>Begin to be able to determine whether or not two shapes are the same size and shape.</p> <p>Show growth in matching, sorting, putting in a series, and regrouping objects according to one or two attributes such as color, shape, or size.</p> <p>Build an increasing understanding of directionality, order, and positions of objects, and words such as up, down, over, under, top, bottom, inside, outside, in front, and behind.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for children to find shapes in the environment, indoors and outdoors.</p> <p>Create cutouts of shapes out of various types of materials (plastic lids, construction paper, cardboard, fabric). Have children use the cutout shapes to sort into groups.</p> <p>Use pattern cards to string square, round, oval beads.</p> <p>Play Simon Says using directional words (up, over, next to, down, behind) with bean bags.</p>	<p>Identifies circle, square, and triangle.</p> <p>Describes the ways they have sorted shapes.</p> <p>Describes objects by one or two attributes.</p> <p>Demonstrates directional words (over, under, behind, beside, etc.).</p>
	Pre-K	<p>Begin to recognize, sort, and describe geometric shapes as they solve problems involving shape, position, and orientation in space (Geometry).</p>	<p>Provide a variety of shapes for children to use to make shape collages.</p> <p>Build structures with unit blocks talking about shape names and positions of blocks as children build.</p>	<p>Names squares, triangles, circles, and rectangles.</p> <p>Sorts a group of objects using one or two attributes.</p> <p>Describes the position of objects in relation to other objects and themselves using the words: over/under, top/bottom, etc.</p>

Mathematics

Patterns and Measurement

Children who see patterns in their world are better able to remember what they have learned and transfer the knowledge to new situations. Children naturally make comparisons. From a very young age on, children are comparing who is taller and who has more. Comparison is the first step in developing an understanding of measurement.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		Begin to make simple comparisons.	Use comparison words when playing with big and little toys. Talk about “more” and “less” during snack time.	Begins to identify “big” when presented with two objects of different sizes. Notices another child has more (crackers, cheerios).
		Enhance abilities to recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns using a variety of materials. Show increasing abilities to match, sort, put in series, and regroup objects according to one or two attributes such as shape or size. Begin to make comparisons between several objects based on a single attribute. Show progress in using standard and non-standard measures for length and area of objects.	Make simple games using fabric swatches or wallpaper samples for children to match. Provide children with opportunities to compare lengths using rulers, tape measures, and everyday objects. Explore the concept of weight by holding two different objects and determining which one is heavier. Use balance scales with play dough, acorns, shells, etc.	Sorts a variety of objects by color, texture, shape, etc. Begins to identify longer of two objects. Identifies heavier of two objects.
Pre-K		Recognize and copy simple patterns (Patterns/Functions/Algebra). Explore and develop the concept of measurement by using non-standard units of measurement (Measurement).	Provide parquetry blocks to manipulate as a table top activity. When stringing beads, provide picture cards for patterns to copy. Give children a variety of rulers and measuring tapes to measure block structures, tables, chairs, etc. Read the daily schedule with the children and ask questions such as “What do we do after lunch?”	Explores and creates simple patterns using objects, verbally labeling what they have done. Recognizes and copies simple patterns with objects. Measures length and weight using both non-standard units and appropriate tools. Demonstrates an awareness of time concepts and sequence.

Science

Scientific Skills & Methods

Children are naturally curious about the world around them. They use senses to gather information, practice asking questions, measure, sort, classify, and communicate their discoveries. They learn about life processes and properties of familiar objects such as magnets and water. By exploring shadows, weather and plant growth children learn about the concept of change.

Learning Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		Explore materials, objects, processes: Soft/hard, hot/cold; wet/dry.	Introduce toys with different textures, foods with different smells and objects that make sounds. Offer water play with toys to fill, dump, float, and sink.	Uses a variety of actions to explore objects – touch, mouthing, smell, shake, bang.
		Begin to use senses and a variety of tools and simple measuring devices to gather information, investigate materials, and observe processes and relationships. Develop increased ability to observe and discuss common properties, differences and comparisons among objects and materials. Begin to participate in simple investigations to test observations, discuss and draw conclusions, and form generalizations. Develop growing abilities to collect, describe, and record information through a variety of means, including discussion, drawings, maps, and charts. Begin to describe and discuss predictions, explanations, and generalizations based on past experiences.	Set up sand play with nesting cups, spoons, funnels and let children fill, dump. Play matching games. Give magnifying glasses to children to explore outdoors. Ask them to draw pictures of their findings. Collect leaves; sort them up by color, shape or size. Make a leaf graph. During water play ask children to predict which objects will sink or float.	Tries a variety of actions while exploring natural materials. Matches materials with common properties. Collects natural materials, draws pictures of collection, and says what the pictures represent. Tests new materials and predicts results of actions.
Pre-K		Begin to develop procedures and thinking skills for investigating the world, solving problems, and making decisions (Scientific Investigation, Reasoning, and Logic).	Ask children to take turns watering flowers, plants; describe changes in growth. Create a science prop box with nature books, magnifying glasses, magnets, butterfly nets, shovels, and binoculars for children to investigate and collect materials. Play a listening game while on a walk outdoors.	Increases ability to attend to things in their environment. Uses resources (books magnets) to extend their observation and investigation. Names and describes things observed

Science

Scientific Knowledge

Early experiences are designed to develop children’s skills to observe and begin to understand the natural world. By observing themselves and the environment children develop an awareness of and respect for themselves, other living things and the environment. Children become aware of life cycles and changes in materials around them.

		Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Demonstrate awareness of animals and other living things; of weather, the outdoor environment. Explore cause and effect.	Take children outdoors and let them feel the grass, watch the wind blow leaves, watch clouds. Watch fish and read stories which include fish and other animals. Introduce push/pull toys. Play with Jack-In-The-Box.	Points to and names familiar animals. Anticipates outcomes of actions.
		Expand knowledge of and abilities to observe, describe, and discuss the natural world, materials, living things, and natural processes. Expand knowledge of and respect for their bodies and environment. Develop growing awareness of ideas and language related to attributes of time and temperature. Show increased awareness and beginning understanding of changes in materials and cause and effect relationships.	Provide books and magazines with photographs of our natural world. Have fish or other pets that children care for; discuss how their care relates to caring for oneself. Provide indoor thermometers and chart daily changes of temperature. Cook pudding and make Jello.	Identifies an increasing range of animals. Describes how to care for a pet and why it is important. Uses words to describe temperature. Measures and mixes ingredients and discusses the process and changes.
	Pre-K	Begin to understand simple patterns in their daily lives (Earth and Space Science). Begin to build their knowledge of the life cycles of plants and animals (Earth and Space Science). Begin to understand that objects can be described in terms of their physical properties (Earth and Space Science). Become familiar with the concept that materials exist in several states (Earth and Space Science).	Read books about changes in seasons. Plant bean seeds in a classroom “garden” in a clear jar so children can observe and describe root development and plant growth. Place crayon bits on hot sidewalk and in a clear cup of ice.	Observes daily weather patterns. Begins to distinguish between living and non-living things. Begins to understand that living and non-living things change. Participates in observing and describing the effects of heat and cold on materials.

Creative Arts

Music

Children naturally respond to the beats and sounds of music while singing, playing instruments, and dancing. Helping children experience various types of music assists in the development of self-expression and creativity.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy =====	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		Respond to familiar songs and music. Participate in singing, noise, and music making. Demonstrate preferences for songs.	Play all types of music. Attach musical toys to the crib and provide musical pull toys. Sing simple songs and lullabies.	Turns their heads toward music. Shows delight in hearing music, familiar songs, or rhymes. Moves to beat of music Joins in singing by making sounds.
		Participate with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games, and performances. Experiment with a variety of musical instruments.	Provide musical tapes/CDs and headphones for children to listen to music. Sing 3 pitch songs such “Rain, Rain, Go Away” Provide a selection of musical instruments and demonstrate how each may be used.	Listens to and imitates sounds, patterns, or songs. Sings songs using loud and soft voices. Uses instruments in appropriate ways.
Pre-K =====		Spontaneously sing finger-plays and songs. Follow and maintain a steady beat to music. Chant or sing while maintaining movement to a beat.	Sing 5 pitch songs such as “Row, Row, Row your Boat” or “B-I-N-G-O” Assist children in making up their own songs. Clap along to the beat of songs.	Imitates a 5 pitch song. Begins to sing simple melodies. Begins to clap or play instrument to beat of music.

Creative Arts

Art

Art is a form of self expression. Helping children explore a wide range of art materials assists in the expression of creativity. By creating art at an early age, children learn to appreciate art and express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy =====	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see.
		Use large motor movements to explore media. Begin to gain control in grasping simple art tools. Begin to produce marks, scribbles and circles.	Give infants different colored and textured materials to explore with their hands. Provide play-dough or finger paints for toddlers to explore. As children draw with chubby crayons and brushes, talk about what they are doing, for example, "Marlon, you made big lines on your paper with red and green crayons."	Begins to explore variety of creative art media using large movements like patting, banging, poking. Uses whole hand to grasp crayons and other art tools. Shows enjoyment while using art materials.
		Gain an increasing ability to use different art media and materials. Create drawings, paintings, models, and other art creations. Begin to plan, work independently, and demonstrate care and persistence in a variety of art projects. Begin to understand and share opinions about artistic products and experiences.	Provide children with different colors of play-dough. Encourage children to roll, pat, squeeze, and pinch the dough. Add tools like plastic knives, forks, and cookie cutters. Talk to the children about their actions. Create a collage center for children to work independently. Ask children to talk about and explain their art work.	Chooses to participate in art activities. Uses art materials appropriately. Draws or paints something and explains what it stands for. Inquires about what others are making.
	Pre-K	Communicate and express concepts, ideas, and feelings by making art and studying concepts in art produced by recognized artists (Art Program of Studies). Learn about safety and use of safe procedure when handling art materials and tools (Art Program of Studies). Develop skills in using art materials and tools (Art program of Studies).	Provide the children with different types of art materials, such as pipe cleaners, colored tape, scissors and glue. Take children on a neighborhood field trip and when they return give them art materials to create what they saw on the trip. Display paintings by famous artists. Discuss and post safety rules for safe use of art materials.	Identifies some colors by name. Begins to use art vocabulary when discussing art. Begins to problem solve while making art "I can use tape or glue to make it stay on the paper"). Uses paint brushes, drawing materials and scissors safely.

Creative Arts

Movement

When movement is included with creative arts, children begin to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. As they grow and gain more control of their muscles, their movement becomes more technical and artistic, which allows for greater self expression.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Move arms and legs in response to music. Begin to clap when music is played.	Rock infants when singing lullaby. Play music with varied tempo and beat.	Smiles and wiggles when music is played. Bounces in response to music.
	Pre-K	Express through movement and dance what is felt and heard in various musical tempos and styles. Show growth in moving in time to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music.	Play or sing a march song and have the children march to the beat. Provide scarves and ribbons for children to use while moving to music.	Stamps feet in time to a marching song. Varies actions and speed of movements to match tempo of music.
		Move to various musical tempos and styles. Participate in guided movement activities. Grow in moving in time to difficult patterns of beat and rhythm in music. Become aware of position in space.	Sing songs that involve body action and imitation. Provide costumes and props to encourage interpretive dance to various styles of music.	Dances to musical beats and tempos. Follows directions and movements of others. Pretends to imitate the movements of animals.

Creative Arts

Dramatic Play

Children use pretend play to help them understand the real experiences they have in their world. Dramatic Play also helps adults understand how children see their world. Starting with simple acts where infants imitate what they see and hear, children begin to understand that things can stand for something else. These skills of imitation and pretending can lead to an understanding that letters stand for words that are real objects and events in their world.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy =====	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		Imitate what others do. Understand that objects in photos or illustrations can stand for real things.	When reading stories, encourage babies to imitate the actions, sounds, or facial expressions of the reader. Provide materials such as trucks, cars, telephones, and dolls, so that they can imitate the actions of others. Show babies books with photos and illustrations of objects in their world.	Begins to imitate actions, sounds and gestures. Makes sound of a truck during play. Can point to and name a real object and an illustration of it.
		Participate in a variety of dramatic play activities that become more extended and complex. Show growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations.	Provide natural and familiar props such as dishes, dolls, dress-up clothing that will support children's pretend play. Give children opportunities to observe real experiences for them to imitate (feeding a baby, cooking a meal, visiting a store) to extend dramatic play.	Uses props to role play the actions of others. Pretends that toys are real (says "moo" when playing with a toy cow). Tells you they are pretending to be someone else.
Pre-K	=====	Use costumes and props and pretend to be someone else. Create scenarios, props and settings for original dramatizations and dramatic play. Step out of role play situation to clarify or give directions and then return to their role	Provide costumes and props such as items from a grocery store or doctor's office for children to pretend with other children. Follow the children's lead when invited to participate in dramatic play, encouraging other children to take different roles.	Puts on costumes and uses props to pretend to be a worker. Puts chairs in a row and says that it is a bus. Imitates actions, gestures and voice tones.

Health and Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills

Children investigate and learn about their world as they grow in their ability to master and strengthen their large muscle movements. Their health and well-being, sense of competence, and ability to interact with peers during play are directly related to physical accomplishments.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Demonstrate increasing proficiency in rolling over, sitting, crawling, standing, balancing, walking, and running. Demonstrate increasing ability to coordinate movements in grabbing, rolling, tossing, and throwing	Place a variety of washable objects within reach for infants to look at and stretch for. As infants increase mobility, place objects further away. Use pillows and “boppies” to help infants get into sitting positions. Provide push toys, low climbers, steps and slides. Introduce children to beanbag and ball activities.	Demonstrates developmental progression of locomotive skills: rolling over, creeping, sitting, crawling, cruising, walking, Uses whole body to catch and throw.
		Show increasing levels of proficiency, control, and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping. Demonstrate increasing abilities to coordinate movements in throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, and using the slide and swing.	Provide daily opportunities for active outdoor play. Use pedal toys. Create obstacle courses. Play simple games with balls involving throwing, catching, bouncing, and kicking.	Increases control in walking, running, hopping, and jumping Increases balance when walking on lines, curves, and balance beams Throws, catches, and bounces balls. Begins to use alternating feet when climbing stairs.
	Pre-K	Demonstrate increasing stamina, endurance, control, balance, and coordination.	Imitate animal movements to music such as galloping like a horse, running like a cheetah, hopping like a bunny. Introduce games where children can kick a ball in an intended direction Create paths for children to follow when riding tricycles and other riding equipment.	Demonstrates balance and coordination in large-muscle movement: running, hopping, jumping, and galloping. Performs activities that combine large-muscle movements with equipment: kicking, throwing, catching, riding a tricycle, climbing a ladder.

Health and Physical Development

Fine Motor Skills

As children advance in the development of small muscles and eye-hand coordination, they progress to increasingly sophisticated and complex tasks. Opportunities they have to practice fine motor skills strengthen small muscles, build control, and increase hand and eye coordination.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy =====	Benchmarks	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators
		We want children to be able to:		What you might see:
		Demonstrate growing strength, dexterity, and control needed to form a fist, grasp, scoop, pinch, transfer objects from hand to hand, and turn pages of a book. Grow in eye-hand coordination in following object with eyes, looking at hands, putting objects in mouth, reaching for and grasping objects, and filling and dumping.	Provide toys that make noises as infants move, such as rattles, as well as soft toys that they can squeeze. Place colorful ribbons and bands around infants' wrists and ankles. Provide opportunities for children to pick up small objects and place into containers. Give toddlers board books to look at on their own.	Progresses from grasping objects to transferring objects from hand to hand to reaching for objects on their own. Follows movement of objects with their eyes. Scribbles with increasing control. Attempts to turn pages of board books.
		Develop growing strength, dexterity, and control needed to use tools such as scissors, paper punch, stapler, and hammer. Grow in hand-eye coordination in building with blocks, putting together puzzles, reproducing shapes and patterns, stringing beads, and using scissors. Progress in abilities to use writing, drawing, and art tools, including pencils, markers, chalk, paint brushes, and various types of technology.	Encourage children to squeeze and manipulate play dough. Provide materials and tools including scissors, paper punch, and staplers to make collages. String beads, use lacing cards, offer a variety of puzzles to build hand-eye coordination. Provide easels and vertical surfaces for children to use with chubby crayons and markers.	Uses fingers and hands to accomplish fine motor tasks. Shows increasing strength and control when using scissors, hole punches, and staplers. Uses tools like crayons in a functional manner.
Pre-K	=====	Apply hand, finger, and wrist movements in ways that demonstrate increasing eye-hand coordination, strength, and control.	Allow children to pour their own juice at snack. Provide small brushes for watercolor painting. Use 12 – 16 piece puzzles.	Pours liquids from one container to another without spilling. Uses pincer grasp to manipulate writing, drawing and painting tools. Completes 12-16 pieces puzzles.

Health and Physical Development

Health Status & Practices

Children appreciate being able to take responsibility for daily health and self-help routines. Development of sensible health habits promotes independence, nutrition, and hygiene.

Developmental Continuum	Infancy ===== Pre-K	Benchmarks We want children to be able to:	Sample Learning Experiences	Indicators What you might see:
		Attempt to participate in personal care routines when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, and toileting.	During daily routines, encourage children to help dress and undress themselves. Provide time and needed tools for self help skills (unbreakable cups with handles, small spoons, paper towels for clean-up, bibs)	Cooperates during dressing and undressing. Feeds self by holding bottle, using fingers, using spoon or cup.
		Progress in physical growth, strength, stamina, and flexibility Participate actively in games, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness. Show growing independence in hygiene, nutrition, and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, and toileting. Build awareness and ability to follow basic health and safety rules such as fire safety, traffic and pedestrian safety, and responding appropriately to potentially harmful objects, substances, and activities.	Adapt environment so children can independently practice healthy routines like hand washing, brushing teeth and toileting. Schedule regular fire drills and discuss safety rules with children. Introduce children to concepts of physical fitness through regular walking and simple active games such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”.	Shows independence in personal hygiene. Listens to and follows directions during emergency drills. Chooses to participate in daily physical activity.
		Practice behaviors that promote health and safety.	Read and discuss books about healthy foods (“Hungry Caterpillar”, “Bread and Jam for Frances”). Invite or visit public safety officers to talk about safety practices. Encourage children to develop safety rules for use during daily routines.	Begins to understand that foods have different nutritional values. Becomes aware of and follows health and safety rules and emergency procedures. Performs basic hygiene and self-help tasks with increasing skill.

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